

# STARS AND STRIPES®

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas

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## Pentagon to get unprecedented 3rd acting chief

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — After months of delay, President Donald Trump was expected Monday to ask the Senate to confirm Mark Esper as the successor to former Defense Secretary Jim Mattis, whose resignation opened an unprecedented period of senior level instability at the Pentagon.

Esper's nomination has been in the works for weeks, and he is already serving as the acting secretary.

In a twist, he would have to step aside from his temporary post leading the Pentagon while the Senate considers his nomination for the permanent job.

A third fill-in will be named, this time Richard Spencer, who has served as the civilian leader of the Navy since August 2017.

His tenure as acting secretary is expected to be brief. Esper is expected to be confirmed as early as Thursday and then sworn in as the permanent secretary. Spencer would then return to the Navy.

The Republican-led Senate is expected to hold a confirmation hearing for Esper on Tuesday.

Esper took over as acting secretary in June when Pat Shanahan abruptly quit after having served as acting secretary since Mattis departed.

Prior to the Trump administration, only twice before has the Defense Department been led by an acting secretary — most recently in 1989 — and never has it had more than one in a single year.

Mattis resigned after two years in the job after a series of policy disagreements with Trump.

## Security experts: US woefully unprepared for cyberwarfare

CQ Roll Call

WASHINGTON — War in cyberspace is fully on, and the U.S. is losing it, according to about two dozen national security experts.

The U.S. military is increasingly adept at mounting cyberattacks in places like Russia and Iran, but America's computers are almost completely defenseless. Without strong protections, offensive attacks can be invitations for disaster instead of deterrents.

"I believe we are in a declared cyberwar," said Michael Bayer, a longtime Pentagon adviser who led a recent review of Navy cybersecurity. "It is aimed at the whole of society and the state. I believe we are losing that war."

Whether the attack is a hack of a Pentagon contractor or misinformation spread on social media, U.S. adversaries are increasingly successful in that ethereal battleground. U.S. leaders are only slowly realizing how much the rules have changed, and the required focus, leadership and strategic thinking remain woefully wanting, critics charge.

"While we have made progress, it would be fair to say we have a long way to go," said South Dakota Republican Sen. Mike Rounds, who chairs the Senate Armed Services Cybersecurity Subcommittee.

The military's torpid response has been caused by bureaucratic inertia, the political dominance of traditional weapons and military organizations, the distraction of the post-9/11 wars, and a failure to comprehend the cumulative damage and how rapidly warfare is changing.

America's adversaries have stayed in the so-called "gray zone," below the level of attacks that would trigger a full-scale U.S. response.

In cyberspace, Bayer compares that to a parasite that constantly saps its host — but not so much as to trigger a full-scale white blood cell counterattack.

Rep. Mike Gallagher, who co-chairs the Cyberspace Solarium Commission, a bipartisan panel studying competition in the infosphere, is among those calling for a national awareness campaign.

"Ultimately, our success or failure in cyber will come down not to algorithms or technology but to human beings," said the Wisconsin Republican, who noted that he was not speaking for the commission. "Everyone who has a cellphone in their pocket is in some ways on the front lines of a geopolitical competition."

Information operations and cyberattacks in the gray zone have grown in recent years — in number, sophistication and damage.

China's 2018 attack on a Navy contractor gave that country access not just to details of a key new anti-ship missile but also to much of what the Navy knows about China's maritime capabilities.

China has also reportedly stolen data on F-35 fighters, littoral combat ships, anti-missile systems and drones operated by the U.S. military.

The broader U.S. economy has lost more than \$1 trillion in intellectual property pilfered in cyberspace, experts say.

Russia has specialized in a massive information warfare campaign to influence U.S. elections by sowing dissent

and planting lies in U.S. social media circles. North Korea, Iran and even terrorist groups have shown they, too, can do damage with a few keystrokes.

On June 11, national security adviser John Bolton publicly stated that the U.S. has stepped up its offensive cyberassaults since last year. The message to America's adversaries, Bolton said, is "You will pay a price."

Four days later, The New York Times reported that the United States, in a classified operation, had penetrated Russia's energy grid with malware that, if triggered, could disrupt Russia's electrical systems. The Pentagon has said the Times reporting was inaccurate but has not provided any clarification.

Later that month, Yahoo News disclosed that U.S. Cyber Command had hit Iranian military computers after Iran shot down a U.S. drone in the Persian Gulf.

Despite this ramped-up offense, America's defenses lag behind, according to retired Army Gen. Keith Alexander, who headed the National Security Agency and U.S. Cyber Command.

The Navy cybersecurity review, made public in March, said those defenses are severely lacking.

As the Navy prepares to win "some future kinetic battle," the report said, it is "losing" the current one. Defense contractors "hemorrhage critical data."

The current situation is the result of a "national miscalculation" about the extent to which the cyber war is upon us, and the vaunted U.S. military's systems have been "compromised to such (an) extent that their reliability is questionable."

# Trump moves to end asylum protections

Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration on Monday moved to end asylum protections for most Central American migrants in a major escalation of the president's battle to tamp down the number of people crossing the U.S.-Mexico border.

According to a new rule published in the Federal Register, asylum-seekers who pass through another country first will be ineligible for asylum at the U.S. southern border.

The rule, expected to go into effect Tuesday, also applies to children who have crossed the border alone.

The rule applies to anyone arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border. Sometimes asylum-seekers from Africa and other continents arrive there, but most migrants arriving there are Central Americans.

There are some exceptions. If

someone has been trafficked, if the country the migrant passed through did not sign one of the major international treaties that govern how refugees are managed (though most Western countries have signed them) or if an asylum-seeker sought protection in a country but was denied, then a migrant could still apply for U.S. asylum.

But the move by President Donald Trump's administration was meant to essentially end asylum protections as they now are on the southern border, reversing decades of U.S. policy on how refugees are treated and coming as the government continues to clamp down on migrants and as the treatment of those who made it to the country is heavily criticized as inhumane.

Attorney General William Barr said that the United States is "a generous country but is being completely overwhelmed" by the burdens asso-

ciated with apprehending and processing hundreds of thousands of migrants at the southern border.

"This rule will decrease forum shopping by economic migrants and those who seek to exploit our asylum system to obtain entry to the United States," Barr said in a statement.

The policy is almost certain to face a legal challenge.

U.S. law allows refugees to request asylum when they arrive at the U.S. regardless of how they did so, but there is an exception for those who have come through a country considered to be "safe." But the Immigration and Nationality Act, which governs asylum law, is vague on how a country is determined "safe"; it says "pursuant to a bilateral or multilateral agreement."

Right now, the U.S. has such an agreement, known as a "safe third country," only with Canada. Under a recent agreement

with Mexico, Central American countries were considering a regional compact on the issue, but nothing has been decided.

Guatemalan officials were expected in Washington on Monday, but apparently a meeting between Trump and Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales was canceled amid a court challenge in Guatemala over whether the country could agree to a safe third with the U.S.

American Civil Liberties Union attorney Lee Gelernt, who has litigated some of the major challenges to the Trump administration's immigration policies, said the rule was unlawful.

"The rule, if upheld, would effectively eliminate asylum for those at the southern border," he said. "But it is patently unlawful."

## Army set to receive new marksmen rifles next year

BY MARTIN EGNASH

Stars and Stripes

The U.S. Army has long sought to equip its marksmen with a more maneuverable precision rifle. The wait could be over as soon as next year.

Heckler and Koch Defense Inc., the German firearms manufacturing company, plans to deliver between 5,000 and 6,000 new Squad Designated Marksman Rifles in early 2020, the company said in a statement.

"The HK SDMR system will add much-needed capabilities to virtually every squad in the Army," H&K-USA Chief Operating Officer Michael Holley said, according to the statement Friday. "We are honored by this opportunity."

The rifle, a modified 7.62 mm NATO G28, will be manu-

factured in Oberndorf, Germany, which is about an hour southwest of U.S. European Command headquarters in Stuttgart.

The weapons will start being delivered next year to the H&K-USA facility in Columbus, Ga., the statement said.

The G28 is a military version of the civilian semiautomatic MR308 competition rifle, which "provides a maximum effective range and a high first round hit probability up to 600 meters (and) will also allow suppressive fire against man-sized targets up to 800 meters," according to the H&K website.

The new 7.62 mm squad-designated marksman rifles would "give infantry and other close-combat units a better chance of penetrating enemy body armor," the H&K statement said.

## Japan Coast Guard rescues another US servicemember

BY AYA ICHIHASHI

Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — For the second time in a month, a Japan Coast Guard helicopter rescued a U.S. servicemember swept out to sea Sunday at a popular but often dangerous swimming and diving spot known as Mermaid Grotto.

Three U.S. servicemembers were pulled away from shore by a rip tide, according to a 2:20 p.m. emergency call by another servicemember, said Takeru Kamisato, a spokesman for Japan's 11th Regional Coast Guard in Naha.

"Two made it back on their own, but one got left behind," he said.

A helicopter rescued the servicemember and took him to the coast guard base station in Naha.

"The servicemember wasn't hurt," Kamisato said.

A high-wave warning was in effect across the Okinawa main island, with strong southwest winds reaching close to 21 knots Sunday.

Mermaid Grotto, also known as Apogama, seems like a family friendly beach with a cave and tide pool at low tide; however, it gets rough quickly when the wind shifts to the north or west, and a rip current can occur when the tide is going out or coming in.

A sign posted at the entrance to Apogama, written in English and Japanese, warns visitors of the hazardous and unpredictable water conditions and recommends water-related activities be conducted at a safer location on the island.



# VA abandons over 208K health care applications in this year

*The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*

An arm of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Atlanta eliminated 208,272 applications from across the country for health care early this year amid efforts to shrink a massive backlog of requests, saying they were missing signatures or information about military service and income, according to records reviewed by The Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

Veterans groups say the VA should have done more to communicate with the veterans before closing their applications, some of which date to 1998. Troops face additional challenges in applying for VA health care as they grapple with re-entry into civilian life, change addresses following overseas deployments and suffer from combat stress, they said.

In the middle of the controversy is the VA's Health Eligibility Center, the Atlanta office that oversees the process by which veterans seek access to the VA medical system. It and its parent agency have come

under intense scrutiny in recent years for mismanagement and delays in providing medical care, presenting a thorny challenge for the administration of President Donald Trump, who focused on veterans' care during his presidential campaign.

As of April, 8.8 million veterans were enrolled in the VA's health care system, the agency's records show. The VA said it enrolled 395,417 people in its health care system and rejected 98,897 in the fiscal year ending in September. Its backlog of pending applications totaled 317,157 in April, down from a high of 886,045 last year, according to records the VA sent the Atlanta Journal-Constitution.

That current backlog is still "way too high," said Jeremy Butler, CEO of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, a New York-based advocacy group. He suggested additional collaboration between the VA and veteran service groups could shrink it more.

The VA sent out one rejection

letter to each of those applicants in 2016. In 2017, a bipartisan group of federal lawmakers — including Georgia Sen. Johnny Isakson, a Republican — urged the VA to send the applicants an additional letter clarifying what missing information they needed to turn in. The lawmakers were responding to allegations that a coding error caused the VA to send veterans incorrect letters about what they still needed to submit.

The VA said it opted against sending an additional letter after its Office of Inspector General determined there was no such error and that the letters it sent in 2016 were appropriate and complied with federal law.

The VA said veterans may reapply for health care. The agency said it is now striving to contact people about incomplete applications up to six times each with phone calls and letters. Its Health Eligibility Center in Atlanta, meanwhile, has added 115 employees since July 2016.

## India's moon mission was aborted due to mishap

*Associated Press*

NEW DELHI — India's space organization is examining the technical snag that led to the aborting of the launch Monday of a spacecraft intended to land on the far side of the moon, an official said.

The Chandrayaan-2 mission was called off shortly before liftoff early Monday by the Indian Space Research Organization when a "technical snag" was observed in the 640-ton, 14-story rocket launcher.

Vivek Singh, the ISRO's media director, said the organization should be able to choose a new launch date within days. He declined to go into details.

Chandrayaan, the Sanskrit word for "moon craft," is designed for a soft landing on the lunar south pole and to send a rover to explore water deposits confirmed by a previous orbiting Indian space mission.

Pallava Bagla, science editor of New Delhi Television news channel, said that launch windows have to meet several technical criteria and it could take weeks or months for a new date.

He also said on his channel that the rocket and the satellite were safe, and the highly inflammable liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen have been removed from the rocket.

The full details of what went wrong will be available when scientists can access the rocket and after a full analysis is carried out, he said.

Dr. K. Sivan, chairman of the ISRO, said last week that the \$140 million Chandrayaan-2 mission was the nation's most prestigious to date, in part because of the technical complexities of soft landing on the lunar surface — an event he described as "15 terrifying minutes."

If India did manage the soft landing, it would be only the fourth country to do so after the U.S., Russia and China.

## VA smoking ban doesn't apply to workers

BY NIKKI WENTLING

*Stars and Stripes*

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs announced its health care facilities will soon be "smoke-free," though a smoking ban set to take effect Oct. 1 does not apply to employees, the agency clarified Friday.

While veterans, visitors, volunteers, contractors and vendors will be prohibited from smoking on VA grounds, employees will keep their smoking privileges because of a memorandum of understanding between the VA and the American Federation of Government Employees, a federal union that represents VA workers.

The memorandum requires

the department to maintain smoking areas for employees, said Tim Kauffman, a communications specialist with the AFGE.

"By Oct. 1, VA will institute this commonsense policy for patients, visitors, contractors, volunteers and vendors throughout the Veterans Health Administration, but unfortunately, AFGE has not agreed to allow VA to curb employee smoking at department health care facilities," the VA said Friday in a statement.

A VA nurse in Michigan called the discrepancy unfair.

"We are not a smokeless facility, then, so why are they even promoting it?" the nurse said, speaking on the condition

of anonymity out of concern she would be reprimanded for criticizing the policy.

"How can I look at a veteran with integrity and say, 'I can't let you go out to smoke,' but my coworker just went out there? My feeling is, it should be all or none."

The VA announced in early summer the new smoke-free policy at its hospitals, clinics and nursing homes, citing "growing evidence" that smoking, as well as secondhand and thirdhand smoke, is a medical and safety risk. The policy prohibits cigarettes, cigars, pipes, vape pens and e-cigarettes.

Anyone caught violating the policy could be subject to a \$50 fine.

# Turkey hopes to make weapons with Russia

Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey — Turkey hopes to co-produce high-tech weaponry systems with Russia in the future, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said, further defying its NATO ally the United States, which has warned the country of possible sanctions over its purchase of a Russian-made missile defense system.

The Turkish leader made the comments Monday, hours after two more Russian cargo planes landed in Turkey to deliver parts of the Russian-made

S-400 missile system that Ankara is acquiring from Russia despite strong U.S. objections.

“They said, ‘They can’t buy them.’ They said, ‘They can’t deploy them anywhere.’ They said, ‘It’s not right to buy them,’ and as of today, the eighth plane has arrived and has started to unload its contents,” said Erdogan, adding that the system would be fully deployed in less than a year.

“God willing, in April 2020 we’ll bring [the deployment] to an end, and with that, we’ll be among the limited number of

countries in the world in terms of air defense systems,” he said. “Now the goal is joint production with Russia.”

Earlier, the Turkish Defense Ministry said two more Russian cargo planes landed at the Murted Air Base near the capital, Ankara, bringing the Russian-made S-400 systems’ components for the fourth day running. They were the eighth and ninth planes to land at Murted since Friday.

The U.S. has repeatedly warned Turkey that it will impose sanctions on the NATO-

member country and exclude it from the F-35 stealth fighter jet program if Ankara doesn’t drop its S-400 purchase.

Washington says the Russian S-400s are incompatible with NATO equipment and may lead to Russia acquiring sensitive data concerning the F-35s.

Turkey has refused to bow to U.S. pressure, saying its defense purchase is a matter of national sovereignty and that the agreement with Russia is a commercial deal it can’t cancel.

# Epstein to remain jailed as judge considers bail

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Financier Jeffrey Epstein will remain behind bars for now as a federal judge mulls whether to grant bail on charges he sexually abused underage girls.

The judge said during a hearing Monday in New York he needed more time to make a decision.

Federal prosecutors maintained the well-connected Epstein, 66, is a flight risk and danger to the community — saying he should remain incarcerated until he is tried on charges that he recruited and abused dozens of underage girls in New York and Florida

in the early 2000s.

Prosecutors said their case is getting “stronger by the day” after several more women contacted them in recent days to say he abused them when they were underage.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Alex Rossmiller also revealed Monday that authorities found “piles of cash,” “dozens of diamonds” and an expired passport with Epstein’s picture and a fake name during a raid of his Manhattan mansion following his July 6 arrest.

Epstein’s lawyers said he has not committed crimes since pleading guilty to charges of soliciting a minor for prostitution

in Florida in 2008 and that the federal government is reneging on a 12-year-old plea deal not to prosecute him. They said they planned to file a motion to dismiss the case and that Epstein should be allowed to await trial under house arrest in his \$77 million Manhattan mansion, with electronic monitoring.

In a written submission Friday to U.S. District Judge Richard M. Berman, prosecutors shared new information about their investigation and why they perceive Epstein as dangerous.

They said several additional women in multiple jurisdictions had identified themselves to

the government, claiming Epstein abused them when they were minors. Also, dozens of individuals have called the government to report information about Epstein and the charges he faces, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors said they believe Epstein might have tried to influence witnesses after discovering that he had paid a total of \$350,000 to two individuals, including a former employee, in the last year. That came after the Miami Herald reported the circumstances of his state court conviction in 2008, which led to a 13-month jail term and his deal to avoid federal prosecution.

# Code-breaker Turing to be face of new British bank note

Associated Press

LONDON — Code-breaker and computing pioneer Alan Turing has been chosen as the face of Britain’s new 50-pound note, the Bank of England announced Monday.

Gov. Mark Carney said Turing, who did groundbreaking work on computers and artificial intelligence, was “a giant on whose shoulders so many now stand.”

During World War II, Turing

worked at the secret Bletchley Park code-breaking center, where he helped crack Nazi Germany’s secret codes by creating the “Turing bombe,” a forerunner of modern computers. He also developed the “Turing Test” to measure artificial intelligence.

After the war, he was prosecuted for homosexuality, which was then illegal, and forcibly treated with female hormones.

He died at age 41 in 1954 after eating an apple laced

with cyanide. Turing received a posthumous apology from the British government in 2009 and a royal pardon in 2013.

The U.K.’s highest-denomination note is the last to be redesigned and switched from paper to more secure and durable polymer.

The redesigned 10- and 20-pound notes feature author Jane Austen and artist J.M.W. Turner.

The Turing bank note will enter circulation in 2021. It

includes a photo of the scientist, mathematical formulas and technical drawings, and a quote from Turing: “This is only a foretaste of what is to come, and only the shadow of what is going to be.”

Former lawmaker John Leech, who led the campaign for a pardon, said he was “absolutely delighted” by the choice.

“I hope it will go some way to acknowledging his unprecedented contribution to society and science,” he said.



# AMERICAN ROUNDUP

## Couple rolls 7s, 11s with daughter's birth

**MO** ST. LOUIS — A St. Louis couple has rolled all 7s and 11s with the birth of their daughter.

J'Aime Brown was born at 7:11 p.m. on July 7, which convenience store chain 7-Eleven marks as 7-Eleven Day. Her birth weight? Seven pounds and 11 ounces, obviously.

TV station Fox 2 reported that Rachel Langford and Johntez Brown are thrilled and that the hospital says the mother and baby are doing well.

## Great whites spotted at Cape Cod beaches

**MA** BOSTON — Great white sharks were spotted at three Cape Cod beaches, prompting a brief closure of the beaches Saturday, the Cape Cod Times reported.

Police and fire authorities said the sharks were seen by the Head of the Meadow Beach and Coast Guard Beach in Truro and at Nauset Beach in Orleans. Each beach was closed to swimming for an hour.

Researchers on Cape Cod launched a new study last month focused on the hunting and feeding habits of the region's great white sharks following last year's two attacks on humans, including the state's first fatal one in more than 80 years.

## Man atop furnace forces evacuation

**PA** BETHLEHEM — A man who climbed atop the rusting blast furnace at a former eastern Pennsylvania steel mill is facing a felony charge of risking a catastrophe.

Jonathan David Wallace, 25, of Mertztown was also charged

Sunday with reckless endangering and defiant trespass following the more than 21-hour ordeal at the old Bethlehem Steel Corp. site that ended Saturday.

An outdoor concert scheduled at the SteelStacks campus was canceled and about 1,500 people evacuated after the man climbed up shortly before 7 p.m. Friday, balancing precariously on a single steel beam hundreds of feet above the venue. Events scheduled later were postponed or canceled.

Officers climbed to a platform below and talked to the man for hours, and he was taken into custody about 4:30 p.m. Saturday.

## Firecracker lit to divert attention

**CA** ALAMEDA — Authorities are searching for two people suspected of exploding a firecracker inside a busy Northern California store to divert attention while stealing a shopping cart loaded with groceries.

KTVU-TV reported that the blast Thursday frightened shoppers and prompted a shutdown of the Safeway store in Alameda.

Police said a man threw the firecracker in the store's refrigerated beer section, creating a diversion that allowed a woman to leave the store with the full cart.

## Sushi ingredient blamed for 2 fires

**WI** MADISON — The Madison Fire Department said the spontaneous combustion of a sushi ingredient is being blamed for two separate restaurant fires.

Authorities told Wisconsin Public Radio that an April 5 fire at Sumo Steakhouse and Sushi

Bar and another May 10 at the Takara Japanese Restaurant both started after deep-fried tempura flakes caught on fire.

The ingredient is used to add crunch to some sushi rolls. But heat generated from the process can build to the point that the crunchy, cooked batter can ignite.

Authorities said surveillance footage confirmed the source at the Sumo restaurant.

## Man, 75, kicks gator that attacked his dog

**FL** PALM HARBOR — A 75-year-old man said he kicked an 8-foot alligator in the snout after it attacked his dog.

Buddy Ackerman said the gator came from a retention pond near his Palm Harbor condominium last week and grabbed the dog while they were out for an early morning walk. He kicked the gator until it let go of the golden retriever. The animal was not injured.

The Tampa Bay Times reported that Florida wildlife officials came and trapped the gator later that day.

## Fossil of mammal a first in Northwest

**OR** BEND — Scientists said a fossil jaw bone misidentified for 50 years turns out to belong to a bone-crushing mammal and is the first to be found in the Northwest.

Scientists told the Bend Bulletin in a story on Friday that the 40 million-year-old fossil discovered at the John Day Fossil Beds in eastern Oregon is from a Harpagolestes. That's a hoofed mammal that's a cross between a pig and a hyena.

John Day Fossil Beds National Monument Chief Paleontologist Nicholas Famoso said scientists previously thought

the fossil was from a polar bear-like creature.

He said University of Oregon paleontology student Selina Robson started investigating after becoming convinced the fossil was misidentified.

## Man charged with killing polar bear

**AK** ANCHORAGE — An Alaska man is charged with killing a polar bear in violation of federal law.

Alaska's Energy Desk reported that Chris Gordon, 35, of Kaktovik, shot the bear outside his home.

Federal prosecutors say Gordon left the carcass there for five months without salvaging any part of it.

Ryan Tansey, a federal prosecutor, said Gordon allegedly left butchered whale meat outside his home, which attracted the bear.

## Sotheby's holding its first sneaker auction

**NY** NEW YORK — True sneaker heads will get the opportunity to expand their collection as Sotheby's in New York holds its first sneaker auction.

These aren't just any old sneakers but 100 of the rarest, most coveted sneakers around, including the Nike handmade "Moon Shoe" designed by Nike co-founder Bill Bowerman in 1972. Only 12 were made, and a pair is expected to fetch as much as \$160,000.

Another highlight is two pairs of Nike Mags inspired by "Back to the Future," made to raise money for Parkinson's research. Both models light up, and one is self-lacing.

Bidding runs through July 23.

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# Boxer Whitaker, 4 division champ, killed

Associated Press

Pernell Whitaker, an Olympic gold medalist and four division champion who was regarded as one of the greatest defensive fighters ever, has died after being hit by a car in Virginia. He was 55.

Police in Virginia Beach said the former fighter was hit by a car Sunday night. The driver of the car remained on the scene, and police said they were investigating the circumstances of the death.

Sweet Pea was Whitaker's nickname, and it fit perfectly. He was a master of getting hit and not getting hit, a southpaw who slipped in and out of the pocket and rarely gave an opponent an opportunity to land a clean shot.

Whitaker won a gold medal at the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles — one of nine U.S. champions that year — and made his pro debut on national television. He advanced quickly, and was fighting for a major title by his 17th fight, a loss to Jose Luis Ramirez that he would avenge the next year.

But Whitaker was also known as the victim of one of the worst decisions in boxing, a draw that allowed Julio Cesar Chavez to remain unbeaten in their welterweight showdown before a crowd of more than 60,000 at the Alamodome in San Antonio in 1993.

Four years later, Whitaker was on the losing end of another difficult decision against Oscar De La Hoya in Las Vegas, a fight many ringsiders thought he had won.

"When you see the list of greatest boxing robberies in history they were both No. 1 and No. 2 on the list," said Kathy Duva, his longtime promoter. "And every list of top 10 fighters of all time he was on, too."

Whitaker was a champion in four weight classes, winning his first one with a 1989 decision over Greg Haugen at lightweight, in a professional career that spanned 17

years. He finished with a record of 40-4-1 and was a first ballot selection into the International Boxing Hall of Fame.

His style was unique and it was effective, a hit-and-don't-be-hit strategy that was later adopted by a rising young fighter named Floyd Mayweather Jr. Whitaker and Mayweather never met in the ring, but Whitaker did win a decision over Mayweather's uncle, Roger, in 1987.

Still, it was two controversial decisions — one a draw, the other a loss — that may have defined his career more than anything.

The first came against Chavez, the Mexican great who was unbeaten in 87 fights when he and Whitaker met in a highly anticipated fight in San Antonio.

Whitaker came out in his trademark style, confusing Chavez and frustrating the Mexican champion. Chavez stalked Whitaker throughout the fight, but Whitaker wasn't there to be found for the most part, and when he traded with Chavez he seemed to get the better of the Mexican. Ringside statistics showed Whitaker landing 311 punches to 220 for Chavez, while throwing 153 more punches.

But when the decision came down, it was a draw that was criticized throughout boxing.

"He would stand in the pocket and make everybody miss and frustrate the hell out of them," Duva said. "He said it was the most beautiful feeling in the world, to hit the other guy and not get hit."

Whitaker would go on to lose his next mega fight against De La Hoya, despite bloodying his opponent and seemingly out-boxing him over 12 rounds in their welterweight title fight. A poll of ringside writers showed the majority thought Whitaker won, and he thought so, too.

"Of course (I won) but that really doesn't

matter," Whitaker said. "As long as the world saw it, then the people can say who won the fight. I should have gotten 10 out of 12 rounds. It was a shutout. For 12 rounds, he took punishment, he took a beating. He can have the title but we know who the best fighter is."

Whitaker's last big fight came near the end of his career, when Felix Trinidad scored a unanimous decision in their welterweight title fight at Madison Square Garden. He would fight only once more before retiring, and later worked as a trainer for fighters in the Virginia Beach area.

Duva, whose Main Events company promoted all his fights, remembered Whitaker as being as sweet as his nickname. She said he was generous to a fault with a large group of family members, buying a house for many of them to live in before losing it after he retired from boxing.

Whitaker made millions in the ring — \$6 million for the De La Hoya fight alone — but Duva said he had little left in the end.

"He wasn't a spender. He was very modest," she said. "But he was supporting an awful lot of people for a long time."

A native of Norfolk, Whitaker battled alcohol problems throughout his adult life, Duva said. He also served time in prison after violating his probation in 2003 on a conviction for cocaine possession.

But in recent years Whitaker had been happy going to boxing events and meeting fans and signing autographs. He was supposed to be a part of the Manny Pacquiao-Keith Thurman fight night Saturday in Las Vegas, where he was going to be honored as a boxing legend.

"For years he wouldn't do those things," Duva said. "He found out that it was great, everybody was telling him how much they loved him and what a great fighter he was."

## Briefly

# Pagenaud wins his third, Rossi tightens title race

Associated Press

TORONTO — Simon Pagenaud won his third race of the season and Alexander Rossi tightened the championship race with Josef Newgarden in IndyCar's Sunday race through the streets of Toronto.

The win on the streets around Exhibition Place is the first for Pagenaud this year away from Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

The Frenchman won the Indy 500 and the road course race at the speedway to save his job with Team Penske.

Pagenaud had to save fuel in the waning laps to hold off reigning series champion Scott Dixon. But Penske teammate Will Power caused a caution on the final lap and Pagenaud was able to coast to the finish in his Chevrolet.

## Pinot loses time when Peloton splits

ALBI, France — Tour de France rookie Wout Van Aert won a sprint to the line while Julian Alaphilippe kept the yellow jersey after contenders got trapped in an echelon in the final kilometers of Stage 10 on Monday.

A day before the first rest

day, crosswinds caused the peloton to stretch and break up during the last 35 kilometers of the 217.5-kilometer trek from Saint-Flour to Albi in southwestern France.

Defending champion Geraint Thomas reached the finish line in the main pack but Frenchman Thibaut Pinot and other favorites were caught off guard and lost time.



# Talented QB crop aims to shake up SEC pecking order

Associated Press

Alabama's dominance ranks among the most impressive dynasties in college football history.

It has also made the Southeastern Conference a bit stale recently as the league's 14 teams gather for their annual media days this week in Hoover, Ala.

This year, though, a group of talented and experienced quarterbacks could lead to a little more drama in the SEC — maybe. Georgia's Jake Fromm, LSU's Joe Burrow, Florida's Feleipe Franks and Texas A&M's Kellen Mond are major reasons those teams feel they have a realistic chance of knocking Alabama off its title perch.

Still, the Tide will once again be regarded as a heavy favorite to win their fifth league title in six seasons. Coach Nick Saban — now in his 13th season in Tuscaloosa — returns several of his best players, including last year's Heisman Trophy runner-up Tua Tagovailoa, who threw for 3,966 yards, 43 touchdowns and six interceptions.

Alabama blew through last year's regular-season conference schedule by winning all eight games by at least three touchdowns. That success was largely forgotten after Clemson beat Alabama 44-16 in the national championship game, which will surely motivate the Tide going into 2019.

Georgia is the most obvious candidate to displace the Tide. Last year's Eastern Division champion — which lost 35-28 to Alabama in the SEC title game last season — returns the 6-foot-2 Fromm, who has thrown for more than 5,300 yards in the past two years.

Even some of the league's dark horse candidates have experience at quarterback. South Carolina returns four-year starter Jake Bentley and Tennessee has seasoned junior Jarrett Guarantano. Other schools are relying on transfers: Missouri brought in Clemson's Kelly Bryant, Arkansas added SMU's Ben Hicks and Mississippi State picked up Penn State backup Tommy Stevens.

Alabama returns an extremely talented team, even by its lofty standards. Tagovailoa gets a lot of the publicity because he's the quarterback, but it's not a one-man show. Among the standouts: Running back Najee Harris, receivers Jerry Jeudy and Henry Ruggs, offensive linemen Jedrick Willis and Alex Leatherwood, defensive end Raekwon Davis and linebackers Dylan Moses and Anfernee Jennings.

# Royal Portrush a mystery to majority of British Open field

Associated Press

Graeme McDowell winning the 2010 U.S. Open at Pebble Beach was a source of pride for Northern Ireland. Rory McIlroy winning the U.S. Open at Congressional the following year with a record score was a source of hope.

And then a month later, Darren Clarke became the first Ulsterman in 64 years to raise the silver claret jug.

In a span of six majors, three champions came from a small country in the United Kingdom known for its castles, coastal links and three decades of religious and political violence known as "The Troubles."

What began as a question — "Could the British Open return to Royal Portrush?" — became a drumbeat.

Now, golf's oldest championship is set to return to the Dunluce Links of Royal Portrush for the first time since 1951, the only occasion in 159 years that the British Open was not held in Scotland or England.

"I didn't see it getting big enough or sophisticated enough to host an Open," said David Feherty, who grew up in Northern Ireland and makes his return as part of the NBC Sports broadcast team. "It's just extraordinary what they've done."

The response to Royal Portrush hosting the British Open on July 18-21 for the first time in 68 years has been a combination of excitement and mystery.

The championship was a sellout 11 months ahead of time. The Royal & Ancient Golf Club decided in April to provide an additional 15,000 tickets for tournament days, and those were snatched up quickly. That means more than 200,000 spectators for the competition days of the 148th Open. And that should come as no surprise. Royal Portrush hosted the Irish Open in 2012 and drew 112,000 fans over four days, a European Tour record.

"I believe big-time sport needs big-time crowds," R&A chief Martin Slumbers said. "We're certainly going to get that."

And what will they see? That's the mystery.

The vast majority of the 156-man field — only 21 players were at the 2012 Irish Open — will be competing on the Harry Colt design for the first time. That included Francesco Molinari, the defending champion who will try to become the first back-to-back winner since Padraig Harrington in 2007-08.

Clarke still had possession of the claret jug when he returned to Portrush for the Irish Open and was paired with Molinari.

"Being paired with Darren the first

round, it was something I still remember," Molinari said. "So I can only imagine what the Open is going to be. It is going to be even bigger, going back to Northern Ireland after so many years. Defending is always special, but defending in a place where the tournament has not been for so long I'm sure is going to be extra special."

There have been a few changes. To make it a large enough stage for the British Open, the R&A with approval from the club changed the routing. Martin Ebert, who consults on a half-dozen links in the Open rotation, took land from the Valley Links to build two new holes, Nos. 7 and 8. The original 17th and 18th holes are now used for the tented village. The nature of the links hasn't changed.

There are fewer bunkers than at most links courses because the contours and cliffs and dunes serve as a reasonable defense. The 16th hole is "Calamity Corner," where a shot over the ravine on the 236-yard par 3 that falls to the right could wind up 50 feet below the green.

Ebert was profuse with his praise of Royal Portrush.

"It's hard to argue that this will be the finest piece of links land which The Open Championship is played," Ebert said in 2014 when the R&A announced a return to Portrush. "No other venue, I don't think, has such pure links undulations throughout its 18 holes."

McDowell is the only one of three major champions from this generation who actually grew up in Portrush, at Rathmore, the club next door. Even with a victory this year in the Dominican Republic, nothing was as satisfying as his 68 in the final round of the Canadian Open to earn a spot in the British Open. He could only dream of Royal Portrush getting another Open. It would have been a nightmare to miss it.

For McIlroy, the pressure might be greater than going for the career Grand Slam at the Masters.

He is the only two-time winner on the PGA Tour this year and is No. 3 in the world. He grew up in Holywood, but Royal Portrush feels like home. McIlroy was 16 when he set the course record of 61 at the North of Ireland Amateur.

But this is big business. McIlroy is coming up on the five-year anniversary of his last major, far too long of a drought for his skill set. And he'll have the hopes of a golf-mad nation with him.

"It's been a long time in the making," McIlroy said. "And obviously, everyone over there is so excited."



# Braves sweep Padres

Associated Press

SAN DIEGO — Atlanta Braves All-Star rookie Mike Soroka remains on a brilliant run, helped along by a mighty swing by Freddie Freeman.

Soroka struck out a career-high nine to win his 10th straight decision and Freeman hit a three-run homer to break a scoreless tie in the eighth inning as the Braves beat the San Diego Padres 4-1 Sunday for a three-game sweep.

The NL East-leading Braves have won seven of eight.

Soroka (10-1) lost his season debut on April 18 against Arizona but has won each of his past 10 decisions since April 24, a span of 15 starts.

The 21-year-old received high praise from Freeman and catcher Brian McCann.

Asked about Soroka being in the thick of the NL Cy Young Award race, Freeman said: "Who cares about the Rookie of the Year. I think he's running it for Cy Young. 10-1 with a 2 (2.24 ERA), what else would you have to do? He's pretty special. For him to be only 21 and doing that, that's what makes it even more special to me."

Soroka got Sunday's decision thanks to Freeman's shot deep to right field off Trey Wingenter (1-2) with two outs in the eighth. Matt Joyce pinch-hit for Soroka with one out in the inning and singled to right. Ronald Acuna Jr. followed with a single to right. Dansby Swanson struck out before Freeman, who had been 0-for-11 in the series, hit his 24th homer. Josh Donaldson walked, stole second and scored on Nick Markakis' single to center.

Soroka allowed six hits in seven scoreless innings and walked one. His previous strikeout high was eight in a 3-1 home win against San Diego on April 29. The 21-year-old made five starts in 2018.

# Rays nearly perfect against 0's

Associated Press

BALTIMORE — Zipping through the Baltimore Orioles' lineup with incredible ease, Ryan Yarbrough was blissfully unaware of his role in a potentially historic performance until the Tampa Bay Rays left-hander was deep into the finest outing of his baseball career.

After taking over for Ryne Stanek in the third inning Sunday, Yarbrough was poised to be part of the major leagues' first combined perfect game.

"I was so locked in, not until I went out there in the eighth to warm up and I heard a kid yell, 'Don't blow it,' did I realize what the situation was," Yarbrough said.

Hanser Alberto beat the shift with a leadoff opposite-

field single in the ninth inning, wrecking history in the making and taking some of the edge off Tampa Bay's 4-1 victory.

Mixing a cut fastball with a sinker and a deceptive changeup, Yarbrough was literally unhittable — until the ninth.

"Man, that would have been cool, but I can't get upset about the hit against the shift," Yarbrough said. "It has helped me so much in the past."

Tampa Bay's try for the combo perfecto came two days after a pair of Los Angeles Angels pitchers teamed up for a no-hitter while wearing the jerseys of late teammate Tyler Skaggs.

The bid for perfection ended when the right-handed hitting Alberto — batting around .400 against lefties — pushed a

grounder to the right side, precisely where the second baseman usually stands.

"Finally, we get it," Alberto said. "We were trying to get the whole game. He was pitching really good, a really good performance, pitching in and out."

Stevie Wilkerson followed with a single, and an RBI single by Anthony Santander off Oliver Drake enabled Baltimore to break up the shutout.

Emilio Pagan struck out Trey Mancini for his sixth save, and the Rays followed with an obligatory celebration that could have been far more enthusiastic had the team completed the perfect game.

"See if we can do it again next time," Rays manager Kevin Cash said with a grin.

## Roundup

## Verlander, Altuve lead Astros over Rangers

Associated Press

ARLINGTON, Texas — Justin Verlander shook off a shaky first inning with the help of his rookie shortstop.

The result was a four-game series split for the Houston Astros against the Texas Rangers that felt like much more.

The eight-time All-Star followed a two-run first inning with five no-hit innings and Jose Altuve hit Houston's franchise-record ninth grand slam of the season as the Astros beat the Rangers 12-4 on Sunday.

Texas' first inning ended when Astros rookie shortstop Myles Straw kept Rougned Odor's RBI single in the infield and threw out Nomar Mazara trying to score.

Verlander (11-4) gave up four hits, all singles, and struck out seven. He retired his last 15 batters following a leadoff walk in the second inning as the Astros won their second straight after losing the series' first two games.

**Dodgers 7, Red Sox 4 (12):** Max Muncy drew a bases-load-

ed walk and Alex Verdugo had an RBI single during a three-run 12th inning, and visiting Los Angeles beat Boston.

**Yankees 5, Blue Jays 2:** Masahiro Tanaka pitched six strong innings as host New York beat Toronto.

**Phillies 4, Nationals 3:** Maikel Franco homered with one out in the bottom of the ninth inning and Philadelphia avoided a sweep by visiting Washington.

**Indians 4, Twins 3:** Carlos Santana hit a solo home run that broke a seventh-inning tie as host Cleveland avoided a sweep against AL Central-leading Minnesota.

**Angels 6, Mariners 3:** At Anaheim, Calif., rookie Matt Thaiss hit a tiebreaking three-run homer in the eighth, and Los Angeles completed a three-game sweep.

**Athletics 3, White Sox 2:** Chad Pinder scored all the way from first base when White Sox shortstop Jose Rondon made a throwing error trying to start a double play in the ninth inning and host Oakland beat

Chicago.

**Rockies 10, Reds 9:** At Denver, Ryan McMahon singled, doubled, tripled and drove in three runs to lead Colorado.

**Mets 6, Marlins 2:** Robinson Cano homered for the second consecutive game, helping New York beat host Miami.

**Giants 8, Brewers 3:** Tyler Beede pitched effectively into the seventh inning, had two hits and drove in the go-ahead run in San Francisco's win over host Milwaukee.

**Cardinals 5, Diamondbacks 2:** Paul Goldschmidt homered, Adam Wainwright pitched seven scoreless innings, and St. Louis held on to beat visiting Arizona.

**Tigers 12, Royals 8:** Jeimer Candelario hit a bases-clearing double and Gordon Beckham added a two-run homer during a seven-run third inning, and Detroit beat host Kansas City.

**Cubs 8, Pirates 3:** Jason Heyward, Albert Almora Jr. and Kyle Schwarber hit home runs and Chicago completed a three-game sweep of visiting Pittsburgh.